

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR ALL READERS

Please note that everybody who has already sent money for subscriptions to Pirate Chat will continue to receive the magazine as it is published. A full record of each transaction has been kept and despite the long absence of the publication, your support will be honoured.

Readers who are thinking about subscribing to Pirate Chat can be assured that the magazine will now continue, most probably on a bi-monthly basis, containing a mixture of news and feature articles, very similar to this issue.

Any reader comments on this new issue will be very warmly received as it is imperative that we find out exactly how the magazine has been received. With your support, Pirate Chat can once again become the most popular written attribute to the *Free Radio* scene in Europe.

We very much look forward to hearing from you and hope that you will be reading the next issue.

PIRATE CHAT

PIRATE CHAT

PIRATE CHAT

The ONLY magazine to reflect the true pirate scene

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CAN NOW ONLY BE CONTACTED VIA:
c/o SRS, Östra Porten 29, 442 54 Ytterby, Sweden

PIRATE CHAT

Issue number 45/46 - Easter 1996

returns at last!

Where have we been and what have we been doing . . . ?

Two visits to the pirate capital of the world!

Will 48 metres ever be the same again?

The big PC is back!

PIRATE CHAT

free radio news
and features

PIRATE CHAT is produced for worldwide distribution with readers all over the world as far away as the USA, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

A sample copy costs £1.50

A six month subscription costs £7

A year subscription costs £12

- Money is accepted in any currency
- Please make sure that all cheques, postal orders and eurocheques have the payee line left blank. Just fill in the amount of money to be paid but do not make the document payable to anybody. This ensures that we can easily put the money into our account.

ADVERTISING

Small non-profit making adverts can be placed in the magazine free of charge. Money making promotions will cost a small amount and for these, the editor should be contacted.

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WE never said we had gone and just to prove it, Pirate Chat is back!

For a closer look at the reasons for our absence and plans for the future, you should take a look at the centre pages, if you can spare the time.

Instead of discussing the reasons for the lack of PC over the last year or so, I will take this space to welcome you all back into our interpretation of the mystical world of the pirates. It is very nice to be back on the magazine stands and I hope that we can continue, if possible, where we left off and pretend that the break never happened!

As you may notice, the appearance of the magazine has changed in places, what with new typefaces and layout, which will hopefully add to your reading pleasure of this most outstanding publication!

So, what can you find in this re-birth? Well, I have been to the Netherlands on two occasions and as if you couldn't guess, full reports can be found within. The pages of logs are no more and are replaced with news and information and as you will see, there is significantly more emphasis on that wonderful invention, the feature article. We take a look at the FM pirates in a slightly different way to usual and our Southern correspondent has an interesting look at the way in which FM pirates should be listened to for the best results. The Dutch MW pirate scene may have altered just a little since our last issue but we take a look at what's been happening and on what frequencies those illustrious broadcasters can now be found.

Hopefully, Pirate Chat is just as it was previously, if not a little better. Your comments are welcome on this thought and on any matter you might wish to raise.

All the best.

UK FM NEWS

Information from the last month unless otherwise stated

Compiled by The Chief Editor

LONDON and

SURROUNDING AREAS

87.70	PLEASURE	House and garage every weekend
87.90	ENERGY	House, garage, jungle etc
88.40	CONFLICT	Jungle
89.45	LONDON UNDERGROUND	House and garage
89.60	INDULGENCE	A new dance station recently (for me!)
89.80	STATION	Regular soul and reggae outfit
90.35	HART	Non-commercial jungle renegades
90.65	ACTIVE	House and garage
90.75	LIGHTNING	Reggae etc community station
91.60	GENESIS	Soul and reggae
91.80	RINSE	Jungle
92.00	POWERJAM	Round the clock soul and reggae
92.30	WEEKEND RUSH	More junglist fever
92.70	GROOVE	Jazz and soul, Fri. ev. - Sun. night
92.90	BUZZ	Soul and reggae
93.80	VIBES	More of the above!
94.00	JUICE	House and garage. Briefly featured on "Newsroom South-East" (BBC TV) last year
94.25	CONCEPT	One of the few pirates in stereo. Music is 70s, 80s and 90s soul / dance
94.50	KOOL	Pioneering jungle station
96.10	EUPHORIA	Techno, house, garage, now on 95.50
96.15	DREAM	Mixed dance-influenced station i.e. house, reggae, various styles
96.60	CARIBE	Reggae station. Probably soul as well
97.90	BASSLINE	Soul and reggae station
98.20	DEJA VU	Wonder if they chose the frequency to rhyme? House and garage
99.15	FUTURE	Jungle station
99.35	UPFRONT	More jungle
99.65	RAGGA	Reggae / ragga / soul etc
100.35	PRESSURE	Jungle
101.30	ERUPTION	More jungle
101.80	FREAK	House and garage
102.90	CHILLIN'	Techno, ambient and beyond from this innovative station. Weekends

104.30 RUDE
105.00 FREEDOM

105.00 NEPTUNE
105.05 GALAXY
106.40 FORCE

106.80 GIRLS

107.05 RISK

107.50 "FADE ALL"

107.50 DREAM

107.80 SOPHISTICATED LONDON (RADIO)

Jungle style

No, not the RSL gay station with the same name and on the same frequency! But a jungle pirate instead Quite a rarity on the band Reggae etc

If you hear this one, you might think you're back in the early 90s, the station having a distinctive hardcore style. Now on 106.60

Widely heard house and garage station in stereo. The BBC news show mentioned earlier, showed the DTI tracking this one! Another of the handful of non-commercial pirates

Weekends - house and garage. Other times - other styles

Anyone know the actual name? Pop and dance station

Wide variety of dance music

Reggae station

WELL there it is! Don't take this list as being bang up to date (compiled early 1996 and a little late 1995) but more of a survey displaying the trends and amount of pirates on FM in London.

Most of them broadcast over the weekend but some are also heard weeknights, while a small few are 24 hours, seven days a week. Dance music, in its various styles, is still dominant as it has been for the past decade.

"If you like dance music then you'll love London"

There have been other stations playing rock, pop, etc but these are few and far between and they never seem to manage the consistency of the dance pirates.

If you like dance music then you'll love London, though in many cases it could easily be argued that the stations often sound alike and could broaden a little.

To my mind, it's only really stations like *Groove, Energy, Chillin', Concept* and perhaps a few others who manage their own sound.

One thing is for sure, the dedication of all the stations has to be admired and the fact that there are so many of them deserves respect.

fm LISTENING

A MUCH neglected subject. How can an interested person get a good listening set-up with pirates in mind?

An average FM radio with a telescopic aerial will only do so much. However, what's the next step and how much will it cost? Of course, you could spend a fortune but let's make a budget of around £200. For that, you'll get a FM tuner (you need a separate means of amplification unless you buy a receiver (with amplifier built in) - you'd still need speakers though!) and an aerial.

Tuners

Any FM radio will vary on the performance side. The most cost-effective way of getting a good radio is to buy a hi-fi tuner.

That settled, we now need to discuss the merits. Like any radio, performance can be rated as follows:

**Watch
OUT!
Pirate Chat
is back!**

Sensitivity

The ability to hear weaker signals (=sensitivity), without too much background noise (signal to noise ratio). After which, a radio shouldn't *overload* once a 'big' aerial is put on the back of it.

Selectivity

The ability to hear stations near to each other with no or minimum bleed-over.

Some FM tuners have a wide and narrow filter to help on this front.

Aerials

Forget your dipole! Serious FM listening requires directional antennas that give you maximum pick-up ability in the direction the aerial is pointing.

If you have a means of rotation then better still. We need a beam antenna (mounted in a vertical position for pirates).

Okay, so there's some tips. What do I use?

Tuner -

Kenwood KT 3050L
Good performance
No overloading
Wide / narrow filters
RDS (station name display)
Cost about £170
Negative point: the up / down tuning method found on so many tuners these days.

Aerial -

5 element beam from Maplin Electronics
Cost now about £35

The aerial should be mounted as high as is practical and fed with low loss coaxial cable (75 ohms)

I hope that this has served as an introduction to a much neglected subject. Chances are that the average FM radio used by many people can be vastly improved by a small investment. Most don't realise what can be achieved with a good set-up. Try it!

If you need further advice on FM listening, or want to discuss things, write to me c/o Pirate Chat, FM Listening.

Last note - something that should be added that is very important. Don't think that because you spend £150 - £200 on a tuner, that you'll definitely get good reception. Many tuners are designed for hi-fi audio quality and their RF performance is limited. Seek out the ones that offer sensitivity / selectivity etc. Drop me a line - I have information on the ones that are good performers. ●

Southern correspondent

WEST MIDLANDS

89.95	SANGAM	Daily Asian stereo programmes
92.00	APNA	Another of the increasing amount of Asian pirates in the second city
94.20	SKYLINE	Weekday evenings and all weekends
101.50	UNITY	Jungle, female presenters
103.45	PCRL	Pioneering stereo reggae and soul ambassadors each evening from 1800
105.20	PREMIER	Weekend reggae, ragga and soul
105.70	ENJOY	Regular satellite relays in stereo
105.80	COOL FM	"Reaching out to the jungle massive"
106.10	SANGEET	Asian programming with excellent stereo separation
106.30	FRONTLINE	Daily reggae and soul
106.60	FUSION	Reggae and ragga "community radio"
106.80	AVAZ	Asian community programming
106.80	MIDLANDS UNDERGROUND	Hardcore
107.10	DUB	Reggae in stereo
107.50	SELECT	"Heart and Soul of the Nation"
107.60	LIGHTHOUSE	Sporadic rock and pop radio

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

87.90	HEATWAVE	Reggae, nights only
105.70	CENTRE	Dance, Mon. / Thu. even / weekends
106.50	BUZZ	Dance, evenings
107.70	CITY	Dance, evenings
107.90	CASTLE	Dance, Thursday evenings

LEICESTERSHIRE

107.10	GENETIC	Soul and reggae
107.50	FRESH	Soul and reggae

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

87.80	ASIAN LINK	Weekend Asian programming
105.80	JOY	Previously FANTASY. Rave, house, garage, jungle
106.50	FRESH	Soul, reggae, ragga
106.80	FOUL MOUTH	Heavy rock. Recently raided
107.20	S.C.R.	Reggae. Recently raided
107.50	DANCE	Dance! Recently raided
107.90	UNDERGROUND	Previously FREEDOM. Recently raided after purchasing new link transmitter and various other equipment

Midlands Correspondent ▶

What will be happening at Pirate Chat in the coming months?

PIRATE Chat has returned at long last!

Since we abruptly departed from the Free Radio scene after the June 1994 issue, I have received many letters from worried subscribers, but simply have not had the time to reply.

However, Pirate Chat is now returning, hopefully answering all your questions:

"I hope there will be more PCs in the future"

"I'm not quite sure whether Pirate Chat still exists"

"What's the matter?"

"What's happened to you?"

"Could you please put my mind at ease!"

We are back with you once again and if all goes well, we will be here to stay.

Future issues look set to be a good read, with amongst other things, reports on another possible trip to The Netherlands, information on my recent visit to the Live Wire Radio studio, many feature articles from Free Radio personalities, and a great deal more.

In the past, Pirate Chat has received a great deal of reader support, what with

logs and information, and I very much hope that this can continue now that we have re-emerged.

All ideas, comments, information, or whatever, will be extremely gratefully received.

Don't forget that we can now be contacted via the Swedish Report Service at:

**Östra Porten 29
442 54 Ytterby
Sweden**

For those of you pondering over whether or not to take out a subscription, the costs are £7 for six months, or £12 for a year - your support would be very much appreciated. ■

The English - Dutch Pirate Experience

Dutch - English

written by the Pirate Chat Editor

THE date is August 12th 1994 and I am on the way to Birmingham International airport. Why? In a short time, the operator of Holland's most powerful shortwave pirate is to arrive. Yes, at about 1030, Gertie from Radio Delta was due to touch down and begin his weekend stay at the headquarters of Pirate Chat.

Since 1992 I have regularly been exchanging letters with Gertie and regular readers of Pirate Chat will recall that I stayed at his place last time I visited the Netherlands. I therefore thought that it would be nice to ask him to come and visit me in England. Everything was arranged for me to meet Gertie and then show him as much as possible in a very short amount of time!

Quite amazingly, the aeroplane was more or less on time to arrive and Gertie was just the same as I remembered from the last time I saw him - happy, cheerful, and pleased to see England for the very first time.

Without sparing much time we hit the motorway and headed for Preston; where else could we be going but to see the one and only infamous Derek Taylor! He has known Gertie through MW and SW for many years, so I thought it would be nice for them both to meet for the first time.

On the way to Preston, myself and Gertie talked a lot, about Holland and England and of course, about Free Radio in general. Despite my distinct lack of understanding of the Dutch language, we communicated very well, mainly due to Gertie's very good English. It is fascinating how English people are wholly pretty useless at picking up foreign languages but that those from other countries have no problem at all - I'm just glad that I live where I do and that people all over the world can speak my language!

Anyway, after stopping at a motorway service station for a highly priced cup of coffee, we soon arrived at 12 Dorman Road, the most famous address in Preston! Derek met us outside and in we went for lunch and a couple of beers! Next, it was up to the Dutch Pirate Radio Service listening post, which I think Gertie was pretty interested in. I don't think he had ever seen anything like it before; most listeners to pirate stations have one radio and a telescopic aerial, or

at the most, a bit of wire down the garden. Derek does not do things by halves! He has a MW loop that goes all the way round his house and an indoor loop as big as me! He has several radios and all day long, at least one of these is switched on and is scanning the top end of MW for the Dutch pirates. It's hardly surprising that very little Dutch activity gets past Derek without him noticing!

After taking everything in very quickly, myself, Derek and Gertie decided that it was time to sample the delights of Blackpool! Yes, we thought we might as well brave the cold, wet and wind and walk along the sea front! In actual fact, the best we did was to walk from the car to a few pubs but still it was pretty good fun! We did see the famous tower though, painted gold this year for its centenary, as well as the trams relentlessly thrashing up and down, day after day and of course, the brand new roller-coaster standing at 235 feet high! I think Derek was a little disappointed that it was shut but I managed to console him with another pint!

It was very nice to be able to show off England to somebody from another country and I think Gertie enjoyed everything he saw in Blackpool and everywhere else for that matter!

Anyway, in practically no time at all, we had run out of time and we had to start the short journey back to Preston where we left Derek to listen to the MW and from where we began the drive back to the PC HQ. It was very nice to meet DT again and Gertie also found it of interest to meet the most enthusiastic listener of the Dutch pirates!

It was about 2200 when we finally got back home and after a quick cuppa, we headed upstairs to my radio room. MW was quite active and it made a change for Gertie to hear what his pirate friends sound like in England, as compared with the signals he receives in Holland. I think he was pretty impressed with Barones, Tijdbreker and so forth.

The listening didn't last for too long because we had a train to catch in a matter of a few hours! The next morning, it was early up in a bid to get to London so that I could show my Dutch pirate friend all of the famous sights.

Although our train was diverted through an alternative route, we arrived in the capital as scheduled and so began our tour of the city. The underground system certainly appealed to Gertie, because although the Dutch have an equivalent in Amsterdam, it goes nowhere nearly as fast as ours! Also, it gave a chance for a quick rest between rushing from place to place!

I tried to get to all the places of significance and I think I did so quite well, only getting lost a couple of times! We saw Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square, Nelson's Column, Big Ben, Houses of Parliament and so on. We also took a look at Tower Records which was a bit of a disappointment, seeing as though they have stopped selling vinyl like most other places nowadays. Anyway, enough of my moaning!

Although by the time the day was over and we were both tired out, we had seen a lot and I was quite pleased with myself, knowing that I had taken the operator of Radio Delta on a guided tour of my capital city!

The next day, Sunday gave time for somewhat of a rest with not so much dashing around. I finally dragged myself out of bed at around 1000 and after checking SW to see what was on the air pirate-wise, I had a little breakfast. Gertie had got up some time earlier and was already sampling the full 'English breakfast' which he found quite acceptable!

At around 1045, we decided that we should go to a car boot sale. Gertie had been trying to tell me that he had wanted to go to one but because he could not find the correct English words, I hadn't understood him at first. However, on thinking about what he had said, I finally clicked!

These car boot sales, it seems, are quite popular now, not only in England, but Holland as well and they are ideal places to pick up some cheap records - ideal for pirate operators. We managed to have a look at two of these sales and picked up thirty of so records between us which wasn't bad going!

After this, we had lunch back at the HQ and after listening to a little more short wave, I decided that Mr. Delta should see some of the local sites. It was then time, after dinner, to visit a local pirate, where the curse of the PC Editor managed to nearly ruin a transmitter! It seems that wherever I go, pirate equipment seems either to pack up completely or just go barny during my presence!

THE ENGLISH / DUTCH PIRATE EXPERIENCE

Anyway, within what seemed a very short time, Sunday was over and Gertie's return to the Netherlands was imminent. However, for me, things were just about to begin...

On Monday 15th August, I also took KLM flight 412 to Schipol Airport, Amsterdam. This was the beginning of a ten day holiday to the pirate country of the world. Nowhere on earth can such a small area contain so many illegal broadcasters, who whether they play music for themselves or the whole of Europe, always succeed in sounding quite unique.

When I boarded the aeroplane with Gertie, I was really quite surprised to see that our transport across the North Sea was so small, only containing around sixty seats. Trepidation immediately set in, especially when we began the rapid ascent up to the skies! I thought at one point that the whole plane was going to fall into little pieces. However, my fears were totally unwarranted, and all in all, we had a very pleasant flight, lasting about ninety minutes in total.

After touching down in Amsterdam and waiting for my luggage to reappear, it was time to head to Ruurlo and for me to take a look at the Radio Delta set-up once again. The journey didn't take too long on the motorway.

It was early evening when we arrived in Ruurlo but I wasn't to stay for very long on this particular occasion. After a quick telephone call and something to drink, we both headed for Radio Utopia. The operator, Wim, had very kindly agreed for me to take over his garden for a few days and use it as my house!

I arrived to see a huge antenna in the garden and some very friendly people, just as the majority of the Dutch have always appeared to me.

I was to stay at the Utopia HQ for three nights, during which time I was to have a great time and meet a lot of the pirates who I had written to and heard on the air a good many times.

I must at this point say a great big thank you to Wim, his wife and children for making me feel so very welcome. They all did a great job with making me feel at home, providing as much beer as I could take, whatever I wanted to eat and taking me wherever I wanted!

I think Wim's children, Matys and Karljn were quite bemused by having an Englishman in their home but they soon got used to me and I was pretty amazed at their speaking of the English language, putting my limited Dutch well and truly to shame!

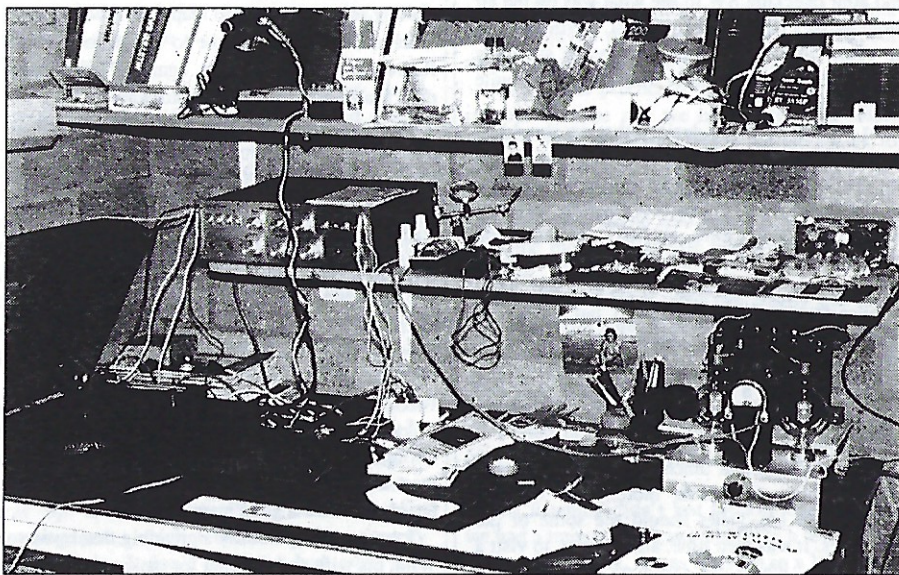
My first night at the Radio Utopia HQ was to be a good one, with a lot of beers flowing, together with one of Wim's longest programmes on MW to date! I can't remember what time we switched on but I can recall that when I finally got to bed, it was well after the usual time for lights out!

In Holland, there aren't a great deal of MW pirates that air substantial programmes; many of them are just QSOing. It was therefore a great feeling to be live in the studio of one of the country's main programme pirate broadcasters and to be drinking and chatting with the operator.

The night ended with a surprise QSO with Radio Pirana. At one time, this station used to be active every Sunday night with a two hour programme. However, Hans is pretty much inactive just lately, so it was nice to talk with him on the air, especially as I was to visit him the next day!

The next day began with a lie-in until around 1000 and was followed by a quiet morning listening to some of the vast amounts of MW pirates. I was quite amazed to hear stations signing up here, there and everywhere, nearly all of the time. Pirates like Armada, Noordzee, Schorpion, Texas and a whole lot more. When I listen in England to the Dutch MW scene, because the stations are usually only audible during darkness, it can be misleading, giving the impression of night-time activity only. This, however, is far from the truth! You really have to visit Holland and listen to the band for yourself to comprehend the scale of pirate activity. *It is practically unbelievable and a trend that follows in hardly any other country.*

When early afternoon came, it was time to meet up with the operator of Radio Silverbird, who although has not been active for some while, does still have all of his equipment in full working order and ready to switch on at any time. I met Jos at a pre-arranged location and within a short amount of time, was at his house, where again, the young children found me to be a very interesting foreign specimen!



Part of the Radio Utopia studio

Jos showed me his studio after a quick beer, all neatly laid out and in working order. We switched onto 6207 kHz for a short while but propagation conditions were not particularly good on the band that day.

After checking out the Silverbird studio, we headed to Oldenzaal to meet Hans of Radio Pirana who I had QSOed with the previous night! I had met him and seen his studio the year before but it was good to see him again. Like nearly of the people I met in the Netherlands, Hans was switched, on his transmitter for a while and I played a few tunes. It's pretty good fun playing around with ± 1 kilowatt on medium wave! I later found out that my little programme had been heard by Wim the Utopia while he was driving around and about in his car!

After meeting Hans, and seeing an absolutely amazing piece of new equipment that he has purchased for his collection, me and Jos moved on to the next station - Japie de Blitzkikker.

We had to make a little drive to the studio location, where we had planned to meet Jan, the operator. Unfortunately though, we couldn't track him down at the site or his house - we came to the conclusion that he must have been in the pub seeing as though we couldn't find any of his other pirate friends either! Anyway, I saw the studio location together with the antenna and while we were driving around, I saw the locations of Oude Pelikaan and Twentsche Rakker. As I said last year when I returned from Holland, some of the antenna masts in the country are absolutely staggering. Twentsche Rakker, for example, has a huge mast in his back yard, and nobody seems to bat an eyelid - amazing!

As evening approached, Jos the Silverbird drove me back to Utopia's place, where I sampled a little home-made wine and something to eat, before heading out to meet a few more pirates! That evening, Wim the Utopia was to show me the sites of seven MW stations and was to introduce me to some more of the people who I have regularly heard talking on the band.

The first stop was to meet Jan the Gouden Ster. We hadn't intended to make this call but I had Jan's address, and as we were in the area, we decided to drop in. I think he and his family were a little concerned at first at some barmy English bloke turning up on the doorstep with a camera! After a while though, they all took it in their stride, and were very friendly. I was shown the studio and antenna, together with a vast collection of old valve radios, which are commonplace in most Dutch pirate studios.

I learned that the Gouden Ster had been caught a few times by the PTT and police but Jan is still regularly in the air with pretty long programmes and a cracking signal into the UK!

After a couple of drinks, Jan thought we might as well pop along to see Jonny Peacon who should be active on 183 metres as the winter months get closer. I was quite amazed at what I saw at this location! Everywhere I seemed to turn, transmitters were staring me in the face! Huge Telefunken units were everywhere, most of which I think were in working order. Never have I seen anything like it!

It seems that the Netherlands must contain literally thousands of illegal transmitters and that anybody who wants one can obtain one with complete ease.

Anyway, soon it was time for me and Wim to carry on to the next destination. This was to

Vriezenveen, where there a good many pirates in a very small area!

On the way to this small town, we travelled past the location of the Zwarte Weduwe whose antenna mast was visible from a good distance! The photograph I took certainly shows the scale of everything in Holland, and to the lengths that the pirates go with the antenna height.

As darkness began to set in on my second day in Holland, we arrived at the house of Radio Toulouse who seemed quite honoured to have the editor of Pirate Chat sitting in his sitting room and drinking yet another bottle of Dutch beer!

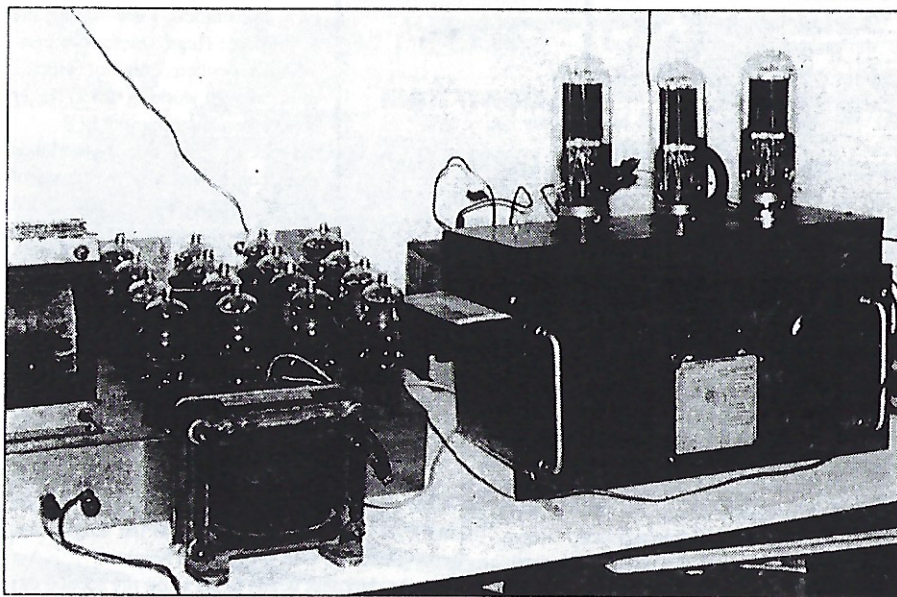
**"To the
Dutch,
pirate radio
is a way
of life,
passed
down from
generation
to
generation"**

I was in store to be amazed once again when I saw the Toulouse studio! It was nothing like I expected and really does have to be seen to be believed!

Anyway, operator Gerald switched on for a few minutes and I said a few things which I have been told were heard by a few pirate friends back here in England.

After a second beer with Gerald and Wim, we made the short journey to Gerald's brother's house - a journey to MW pirate, Radio Mexico! I arrived here to find the whole family and a couple of friends, including a local FM pirate! Everywhere in Holland seems to be dominated by pirates; while I was in Vriezenveen, I even listened to one of the FM stations trying to break the Dutch record of continuous broadcasting without being caught by the authorities!

Anyway, after another drink and something to eat, I saw the Radio Mexico studio and the astounding modulator, consisting of no less than sixteen 807 valves! Everything was tucked away into a little room and the studio equipment as with many of the Dutch pirates, was quite minimal but nevertheless, very fascinating to look at.



Radio Mexico modulator (sixteen 807 valves) and transmitter

Finally, that night, we made a quick visit to see Herman of Radio Noordzee. He is an infamous pirate, regularly caught by the authorities, who has reportedly been in prison for illegal broadcasting. However, there were no problems when I saw him and we switched on to make a short transmission. One thing I couldn't believe though was the sound level coming from Herman's radio while he was on air! It seemed as though the whole of Vriezenveen could probably hear it, even more so considering it was now getting very late! I was later told by Wim the Utopia though, that the radio is often much louder than it had been and how Herman often shouts into his microphone, enough to wake up anybody within a couple of miles!

While I was at Herman's place, I also saw his transmitter and modulator, pretty much the same as Mexico's. Herman though seemed to be very proud of his equipment; he even turned all the lights out so that we could see the sixteen 807s glowing a bright blue! Absolutely fantastic!

When we left Vriezenveen we headed for Almelo and to the house of Appie from Radio Sylvania. However, when we eventually pinpointed the house, everything was in darkness and so we decided it was time to go home.

All I got to see was the antenna mast but interesting in itself.

It was another late night and well into the early hours when I finally got to bed. I didn't mind though as I pondered over another day that had appeared to be quite fantastic! To the Dutch, pirate radio is a way of life, passed down from generation to generation. I was told stories of secret broadcasts from bedrooms as a child and close shaves with the authorities. The Dutch folk take everything in their stride and do whatever they want. It seems to me that if only more people had the Dutch attitude to radio, the pirate scene in the rest of Europe would be so much more inspiring and appeal to the majority rather than the minority. To some people, the Dutch attitude of broadcasting might seem somewhat bizarre but you really have to take the time to visit the country to appreciate the views that I have obtained.

The next day was Wednesday and host to a pretty lazy morning, spent largely listening to the pirates. However, early afternoon resulted in a trip to meet Albert of Radio Scotland in Beilen. I travelled by train and on my travels, journeyed past several pirates, including Ome Jan (C) whose antenna I got a pretty good look at.

I was met at the railway station in Beilen by Albert in his very flashy black BMW, certainly capable of some speed! We arrived at the Radio Scotland QTH in no time at all and after a drink, I was shown the studio. Everything was quite professionally laid out, all very neat and tidy. The radio was switched on and I was surprised to hear a whole string of stations active around 1400 kHz - Zwarte Dorus, Meteor and a whole pile of others. We had a QSO with some of them and also with some of the 183 metre stations.

Talking with Albert I learned a lot about the Dutch pirate history in general. One particular story took my interest...

... a station existed at one point in history that was raided. However, it returned to the airwaves and announced that all listeners should go to the studio. An address was given and within a short amount of time, the whole area was obliterated with fans of the station. Great car loads of

people turned up and provided mass support for the pirate. With all of this back up, a string of insults were fired at the authorities who turned up ready to carry out another raid. Because of all the resistance, it was totally impossible to get near to the main culprits in the studio! Everybody rallied round to give unbelievable support...

Other similar stories were told to me by Albert, all demonstrating the huge pirate following in Holland and the dedication that surrounds the mass interest. Nowhere else in the world have I ever heard of such a terrific phenomenon.

I must comment on the amazing English that Mr. Scotland can speak - absolutely fantastic, as many other pirates, which is just as well really! Anyway, the time soon came round for me to depart Beilen after having been on air with the famous pirate, having a good chat and watching a few old pirate videos. I was darted back to the railway station at what seemed to be the speed of light and was soon on my way back to Zwolle from where I caught another train to meet Wim the Utopia once again.

By this time, it was starting to get dark and the rain was coming down - still, I was getting a good impression of Holland and experiencing the country just as it is!

The evening was spent with a journey to the house of infamous pirate, Radio Bremen. I must say that I was rather looking forward to visiting this very interesting operator and I was not at all disappointed and had a very fascinating time listening to stories that he told. Both Mr. Bremen and his wife talk very good English and were very kind with an endless stream of food and drink. After a few hours of talking and joking, I was shown the studio from which I have listened to Bremen on numerous occasions while he sings along with some of his favourite music!

I was pretty impressed with all of the equipment, all built by the man himself! We came on the air and played a little music and later had a QSO with the one and only Radio Barones, who I was to meet the very next day.

By the time we left Bremen's place after a thoroughly enjoyable evening, it was well into the early hours and I was quite pleased to get a little rest. Tonight was to be the last that I spent with Wim and his family who did so very much to make me feel extremely welcome at every time.

Lying in my sleeping bag that night, I thought for a short while about all the pirates that I had visited in the first few days of my stay in the Netherlands. More, however was to come and in preparation, I soon fell asleep, probably dreaming about pirates for all I can remember!

Thursday 18th August had soon dawned and I woke to find a very nice day waiting for me outside. The sun was blazing and this was the day on which I was to travel to meet my good friend Mr. Barones. Firstly though, everything had to be packed up for me to move on . . . all of the souvenirs that I had been given from many people were taken great care of, and I was extremely pleased to be given only one of two calendars that exist in the whole world - Wim gave me a Radio Utopia calendar, in full colour, with twelve separate Utopia designs - absolutely fantastic!

After my goodbyes, we were on the move to Barones' place. On the way, we passed a few other pirate houses, including that of Radio Mario who although having recently been caught, had got a huge hydraulic antenna mast in his back garden! You really have to see all of this to believe it is all true!

Anyway, we soon arrived at the Baro HQ where I sat in the garden for a while waiting for the Maestro to return from his work. After some time he arrived to see me sitting and waiting! Just over one year after I first met him in 1993, I was soon chatting away with Holland's most famous MW pirate once again!

It was very nice to see Johan, as I talk to him quite often on the telephone and try not to miss too many of his broadcasts. Anyway, after Mr. Baro had shown me my room, the first place we visited was, of course, somewhere to get something to eat and more importantly, something to drink! As with every other person I visited in Holland, Johan and his family made me extremely welcome and did everything they could to make my stay enjoyable, which it certainly was.

The first pirate that Johan took me to see was the Newspaperman who does intend to make a return to the air in the future and after seeing his set-up, it would be very nice to actually hear him on the air myself. His house was very nice indeed, and the studio very interesting, with all manner of equipment here, there and everywhere. Perhaps the most interesting of what I saw was an old transmitter not in full working order but nevertheless astounding to look at. Also, the antenna was unusual, at least as far as UK pirate antennas go anyway! It is a coil on the top of a huge mast which is changeable in height at the turn of a handle. I was quite amazed at the height it could reach, but in Holland, fifteen to twenty metres is nothing!

After having had the pleasure of meeting the Newspaperman, myself and Johan made for the studio of regular broadcaster Nootgedacht, who can be heard most nights on 1636 kHz. We were speeding through the Dutch countryside late at night, and I was sitting next to the most well known and respected MW pirate - great!!

Within a short time, we had arrived at Nootgedacht's location which the guard dogs also noticed, making a tremendous racket! Anyhow, we crept around for a while and eventually reached the studio to find the man himself listening to Santana who had been doing a few tests.



Mr. Nootgedacht was similar to as I had expected - quite jovial and always laughing. Also, for the first time, I managed to get some of his station stickers! I also saw his transmitters that I have heard so very many times back here in England and actually saw the man himself having a QSO with a few other stations.

After the short broadcast it was inside the house for a couple of drinks and a cigar! By the time we left, the hours had ticked away and the early morning was with us - we decided it was time to head home and were well on the way when we turned on the car radio to hear Tijdbreker blasting away on 1636. Mr. Baro quickly turned the car around and we were on the way to see another famous pirate!

As quietly as possible, we drove into Tijdbreker HQ and made our way to the studio where I met Henk who was not at all as I expected as far as appearance is concerned but nevertheless, a very nice character.

Henk's record collection is quite amazing, boxes and cupboards everywhere! I had a look round and said a few words on the air then it was outside to the bottom of the garden for an early morning beer! To think that I was sitting with two of Holland's most regular and well known pirates was extraordinary, especially considering that the time was about 0230!

Anyway, at about 0300, it was back to Baro Towers and time to go to bed for a much needed sleep!

Next morning I had a bit of a lie in as Johan had to go to work and would not be back until the afternoon. I eventually got up and despite the language barrier, I managed to communicate quite well with Johan's mother who kindly got me as much to eat and drink as I pleased - everybody was just so friendly and obliging!

When Johan finished his work, it was off on another pirate adventure, the first port of call being Radio Nootgedacht once again! On the way, we saw Gerald the Santana, who strangely enough, he was going to the same place as us and after having a drink with Johan the Nootgedacht and meeting his wife, Zendster Manuela, it was off to see Santana's studio!

His technical knowledge is very great and so an interesting array of equipment all over the studio was no surprise!

As well as meeting Gerald, I also met his girlfriend, whose English seemed to be better than mine! We all had a chat over a few drinks and Gerald showed his interest in purchasing my Sony 2001D receiver as they are unobtainable in Holland. Perhaps I will sell it to him one day!

Anyway, after seeing a tremendous set-up at Santana's place and gratefully receiving a few souvenirs, it was off to Radio Pelikaan, where just as everywhere else, more beers were drunk and another hidden away pirate studio was seen. We came on the air for a few minutes, just to show me how everything worked and then my flying tour of the Dutch pirates moved to the next stage.

It was Friday evening - the favourite broadcasting day of Radio Barones and, of course, I was looking forward to seeing his studio for the second time, as I had been there a year earlier, and being a part of one of the station's famous international programmes. However, before all of that, a journey to just inside of Germany had to be made so that Johan could meet up with his girlfriend Anna, now another famous voice of the airwaves.

When we returned, it was broadcasting time and I felt quite honoured to be in the driving seat of Holland's "big" MW pirate! Anyway, the drinks started rolling as did the records and "the Big Baro" was well and truly on air! Since I have returned to England, I have received several tape recordings that PC readers made of the transmission and some amazing signals were heard that night.

Unfortunately, another day was soon over but I had Saturday to look forward to which started off with a visit to Radio Hawaii who was as friendly as all of the other pirates and as a lot of others, is privileged to a nice piece of land for his MW antennas.

Radio Hawaii was soon on the air and I was clicking away with the camera to get as many photos as possible.

After seeing everything in working order, it was time for a couple of drinks and a chat before moving on to see the Black Nun, who although does not have a transmitter in working order is still very much interested in the pirate scene.

We arrived at Erwin's place to find him in the back garden with the beers lined up ready!

Also, Ome Jan (B) (I think!) was around and about as he lives very nearby.

We stayed at the Black Nun HQ for some time and saw the old studio and where the antenna used to be before moving on to where my next home would be for the following few days - Radio Delta.

When we turned up at Gertie's place he was busy testing his new transmitter on MW - we already knew this as we had heard him nearly every day that week with various tests. Johan, Anna and myself took a look in the Delta studio before having a cup of tea (I can't keep drinking beer all day long you know!). Before long, Baro and Anna had gone and my holiday was nearly over. However, I had a few days left which were to be spent visiting a few more pirates and travelling around Holland to see some of the sights.

After I had said my goodbyes to Johan and Anna, thanking them for their tremendous hospitality, the rest of Saturday was spent on and off the air on 1636 kHz. In addition, however, we also had a QSO with several of my pirate friends on 76 metres SW. We stayed on MW and Subterranean Sounds, Live Wire, Sierra Foxtrot, Pamela, Pacman, Moonlight, Jimmy, Starshine and a few others all tried to talk to us - all of a sudden, 3 MHz was swamped with pirates trying to contact the powerful Radio Delta!

Anyway, we had a great time talking to various people as the minutes ticked away and the small hours of Sunday morning crept along.

After another lie in on Sunday morning it was visiting time once again and first stop was to a now inactive MW pirate - Theo De Vries. Considering he no longer broadcasts, the amount of equipment at his place was quite amazing! Everywhere were old radios, transmitters - all manner of equipment. This sort of thing is what makes Holland so interesting as far as pirate radio is concerned because most people seem to have once had something to do with broadcasting and those that have seem to have reminders of their pirate days all over the place.

During my stay with Gertie, I visited two more pirates - Newspaperman for the second time, and also Verona. It was quite nice to see the latter for the first time as I have heard him on many occasions and it was interesting to fit the face to the voice.

Verona's English is very, very good and we had some quite fascinating conversations about pirate radio, both before and after seeing the studio.

"To think that so many transmitters exist in so small a country and are mainly operated illegally, is quite something"

His antenna is very similar to that of the Newspaperman, a coil on the top of a mast that is adjustable in height by the turn of a handle, extending way up into the sky. The transmitters were quite impressive as well, with all manner of equipment old and new. To think that so many transmitters exist in so small a country and are mainly operated illegally, is quite something.

After the pirates visits, my final few days on this voyage to the pirate land were spent visiting various places in the country by means of the railway network - something that Britain could benefit from studying at close range. Unlike over here, trains all connect with each other, with the minimum of waiting around on draughty platforms. Travelling is comfortable, with people adhering to notices and not smoking where they shouldn't.

Amsterdam is a bit of a daunting place if you're on your own so I didn't stick around too long, just time enough to have a look in a few record shops where I was very nearly charged for a CD that I hadn't bought - what fun!

As ever, the days passed quite quickly and I was soon flying home. Thanks though, must go out to all those who were so kind, especially, Wim and his family, Johan and his family and Gertie and his family.

For the second time I had seen the country that hosts realms upon realms of pirate radio stations, all doing what they want on the air, at whatever time of the day or night. The air is free and not owned by anybody, a concept that the Dutch obviously fully appreciate, and one that more people should perhaps consider. ■

The Mysterious World of Mediumwave

SO what has been happening with the European mediumwave pirates since we last reported?

In England, activity is still as low as ever, although a couple of stations in the Midlands have been active with broadcasts.

Veteran pirate, UK Radio has made some fairly regular Sunday afternoon transmissions on 1413 kHz. It was on this frequency that Paul Johnson and co. used to be busy with marathon programmes, mainly on Bank Holidays. Back then signals used to be very listenable, which is sadly no longer the case.

UK Radio has been hard to hear, but at least the station has been active on a different band other than 48 metres, where broadcasts have also been heard.

The other Midlands station to have been on MW is shortwave operation Radio Armadillo. 1566 kHz had been the intended frequency, but as you will see from page 20 of PC, plans have had to be shelved for the time being.

Over in The Netherlands, the *Free Radio* scene is not quite as it was a few years ago, but if you know where to listen, a fair number of stations can still be heard.

60% of the Dutch MW pirates are now using frequencies between 1470 - 1566 and 1570 - 1580, together with 1590, 1593 and 1600 kHz. The most popular areas are 1570 and 1593 kHz. This follows a dramatic move away from the previous area on 183 and 186 metres.

It has seemed that wherever the intrepid broadcasters go to, interference follows them. 186 metres is unusable due to huge morse signals and 183 metres is now proving too dangerous to use because of maritime signals. The new in-band channels

could be a wise selection as these cannot be jammed and the only problems are other legal stations. Providing the Dutch boys steer clear, it looks pretty good for them.

If you are a listener to the Dutch pirates, you might notice that many of them are using two or three different names, this giving a certain amount of grief to people trying to log everything! The new craze stems from PTT activity and the pirates believe that using as many identifications as possible will make the task of the authorities a little more difficult.

A recent casualty of the law was Radio 807, a broadcaster of some stature (previously featured in "Spotlight 186" in PC). There are no plans for a return and pirate colleague Korak is also set to curtail his broadcasting.

One of my favourites, Radio Sylvania, has ceased transmitting due to health reasons. The operator had already suffered a severe heart-attack which, in part, had been attributed to the use of very high-powered broadcasting equipment. As a result, no more is expected from the most friendly operator and the transmitter has been sold to Golfbreker.

Radio Mario, he with the most amazing antenna mast is currently making plans for broadcasts on SW; this should prove interesting if he can put out a signal anywhere near as good as that on MW.

Various other international programmers from MW are also making the switch to broadcast on 76 metres. Radio Red King, being a very good example. He, along with most of the others making the change, can be heard on both 48 metres and 76 metres. ●

Pirate Chat Editor / Derek Taylor

PIRATE CHAT

crashes back onto the pirate scene

SO the question on everybody's lips is where have we been?

What has happened at Pirate Chat to leave readers totally abandoned for near on two years?

Back in issue 43/44 I stated how the next issue would supposedly be one of the biggest and best ever but due to a myriad of reasons, this never quite materialised; it was started and about 20 pages completed but after that had been done, the Pirate Chat computer file lay untouched - that is until now.

One of the main reason for our absence has been time constraints which have meant that I have had little chance to physically put the magazine together. Also, my interest in the pirate scene declined to a certain extent, mainly due to the current situation. Shortwave, always having been the main concern within the magazine, is not a patch on how it was when Pirate Chat was launched and I know from speaking to station operators that a lot of listener interest has been lost as well, not exactly providing inspiration for producing a magazine dedicated to this lacklustre pastime.

In the event of there having been no Pirate Chat for such a long time, I have had time to ponder its future and have decided to re-introduce the magazine onto the market, hoping that there is still sufficient interest for it to continue successfully and in hope that readers will try to adhere to some of the comments made. For example, within this new issue there is an article about converting

to 76 metres, an idea that I have tried to push on numerous occasions previously. If this could happen, the pirate scene on shortwave would be able to advance so much for the better.

If people could appreciate that while 48 metres is undoubtedly the established *Free Radio* band where pirates have lurked since the dawn of time and that while it has been a great servant to all who have used it, an excellent solution to current poor propagation conditions on the band is 76 metres, the international pirate scene, the focal point of Pirate Chat, could benefit so very much.

Therefore, another of the reasons for the disappearance of Pirate Chat has been because of reader's unwillingness to take on board my continued efforts at trying to promote this most excellent band. I know that changing the way people think is impossible but if more readers could listen out on 76 metres and more of the station operators who read Pirate Chat could try broadcasting on the band, my efforts would not seem quite so thankless.

An excellent example of how useful a band 76 metres is could be found when I turned on my receiver for the first time in ages on a recent Sunday afternoon; I heard a thumping signal from Radio Blackbeard, a station who has broken away from the regime and is doing what all the others should be doing. Modulation was nice, only a little fading on the signal and the power being used, although it sounded like substantially more, was only 20 watts.

After hearing Blackbeard, I checked 48 metres for signals - **DEADLY SILENCE!** Nothing to be heard at all.

You can deduce what you like, but I know that 76 metres is the way forward - so much more reliable and this will be the home to significant pirate activity in the coming months from the stations that broadcast with live programmes.

It is annoying though how it is always the same stations that are willing to try something new. Names like Blackbeard, Live Wire, Subterranean, Armadillo, Magic Spell, XTC are always the ones that crop up when something different should be tried. What about the established stations? Surely it would be a far better idea to move to this band rather than plug away through awful conditions on 48 metres where there are few listeners anyway?

I urge everybody, listeners and station operators to just try 76 metres. I accept that 48 metres will always be thought of as the main pirate band but what is the matter with an alternative. Forget the idea of 76 metres only being for midnight QSO stations - the band is often usable during daytime as well, proved by my hearing of Blackbeard. Not only will it give the shortwave *Free Radio* scene a chance to revive some of its lost vitality, but if 76 metres could really get off the ground, I for one, would maintain a great deal more interest and although as I have stated, there have been other reasons for our absence, if only people could have considered my thoughts previously, we might not just have darted into obscurity for so long!

Anyway, Pirate Chat is back, so the scratching of heads, chewing on wood and gnashing of teeth can cease! There is no longer any need for people to write to me asking what has happened and whether or not their beloved PC will ever darken their doorstep again because here it is!

As you will see, there is no longer the emphasis on shortwave logs that there used to be. I can see little point in having to go to the effort of writing lists of station names, times and frequencies when this information can be obtained in comprehensive format from publications produced on a weekly basis, such as the SRS Report. The problems with loggings in a magazine is that half of the time they will be out of date anyway. Therefore, the way ahead must be in feature articles and general news, which I trust you will agree with. You could say that this issue is just to test the water and to see whether the support of old still exists.

I will welcome and await your comments because these really will be essential for Pirate Chat to continue where it left off; ideas and articles from readers will also prove priceless and I would also be very interested to know how often you believe the magazine should be issued. A letters page will be introduced in the next issue so that ideas can be put up to debate and with your help I sincerely hope that Pirate Chat can gradually regain the status in the *Free Radio* world that is possessed back in June 1994. ●

Pirate Chat Editor

Raided by farmer?

AN unnamed Midlands MW pirate was recently caught out by a late night prowler.

The station operator had set up equipment in preparation to broadcast on 1566 kHz, when out of the shadows, a mystery person, wielding a huge flashlight suddenly appeared. It is suspected that it was actually a farmer, seeking revenge for unauthorised use of his field in the middle of the night. A car battery, cassette recorder and programme tape were lost; remaining equipment was recovered the following day. ■

Live wire gets shock

ILLICIT radio medium wave broadcaster, Bill Lewis, known affectionately as Billy Boy by several Dutch a mateur stations, was recently dealt a harsh blow.

The pioneering pirate has been rapped by local busy-bodies for the size of his antenna mast.

Calling his station, *Live Wire Radio* on midnight

medium wave broadcasts, Lewis was reportedly heard as far away as 10 miles.

Transmissions, despite their outstanding success, have had to be abandoned for fear of further reprimand.

The radio station will now take a turn of direction with a new, lower profile aerial.

It is rumoured that the plucky pirate will try his luck on the shortwave band.

Hopes are that he might even be heard up to 20 miles away. ●

Fat Cat Ed prints wrong page

THE rich editor of rival radio mag, *Pirate Connection*, was recently involved in an embarrassing Internet mistake.

The Swedish based chief received a page for publication but failed to notice it was one used in a previous issue.

Nothing could be done in time and the magazine was sent worldwide bearing a full page mistake. ▲

Most ties the knot Not that man again!

VETERAN broadcaster, Steve Most, has at last decided to commit the cardinal sin of a true pirate.

Most, 40, of Kent, is all set to marry the namesake of his station, *Radio Pamela*.

Listeners of this multi-band operation can

expect fewer and fewer broadcasts as time goes by.

Marriage always seems to put an end to *Free Radio* and the usual scenario seems on the cards.

A station spokesperson reports that *Radio Pamela* will be inactive while preparations are made for the big day. I

OLD timer, Andy Walker, operator and presenter of more radio stations than words in the Oxford English dictionary, is back again!

Perhaps most famous for his days on WFRL, Walker has returned to shortwave on *Radio Free London*.

The new station, or is it an old station with the words re-arranged,

has been operational on 6400 and 6475 kHz on Sunday mornings.

Programmes have been as intrepid and hard-hitting as ever - yes, the mouth from the south has been bawling again!

Walker, who started his days running local discos and who prefers initials rather than station names, is most certainly the man to be feared on shortwave.

Anybody who crosses the crafty Cockney risks "the boys coming round with their baseball bats."

□

Out Of Order

A huge Out Of Order notice has been pasted on 48 metres.

Despite this, many radio stations are reported to be unaware of the severe illness from which the band is suffering;

such stations are still broadcasting on the old fashioned Sunday morning slot but nobody can hear them!

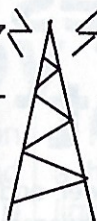
The disease that 48 metres has caught might last for a long time but apparently is not contagious.

Bands such as 76 metres can sleep easy because they are very unlikely to go down with the infection. □

SHORTWAVE NEWS

written by Jonny
the Pirate

Augustsson and
Chat Editor



WITH Easter having just passed there was some extra holiday activity on the shortwave pirate bands. Conditions have been very up and down but quite a few stations have been on the air and I have various pieces of information to tell you.

76 metres

Firstly, in England, 76 metres is beginning to explode, mainly due to Live Wire and Subterranean Sounds; Bill Lewis has changed back to SW after several MW broadcasts which have had to stop due to complaints about the antenna mast. However, SW gains from what MW loses as this powerful sounding pirate is helping to rejuvenate the international scene.

LWR has been busy on both 3910 and 3945 kHz with QSOs and programmes; more of the same is planned. Most activity will be at night but broadcasts are certainly worth staying up to listen to.

Subterranean Sounds is also helping SW gain some of its lost sparkle with programmes on 3945 kHz. Various broadcasts have been heard recently, notably on Easter Sunday. It's nice to hear some constructive talking and a little music out of the ordinary. The same goes for the **Xenon Transmitting Company** who has returned to SW after a break. Operator, Tommy Teabags has not been heard too much over previous months mainly due to work commitments but he now has plans for regular broadcasts, mainly during Sunday mornings and afternoons on either 3945 or 3920 kHz. He was heard testing over the Easter weekend and now seems to have got things sorted out with the transmitter, following prolonged problems with being unable to get any decent power out of the rig. The signal into the UK is good and modulation quite nice as well.

Staying with 76 metres, **Radio Blackbeard** is another who is becoming regular on the band, with Sunday morning shows becoming a speciality. 3910 kHz is a favourite channel, on which broadcasts will be made when the station is not busy on MW. At the same time as many

Dutch MW pirates are moving to SW from MW, things in Britain seem to be happening inversely with Blackbeard now also transmitting on 1566 kHz. Di-pole antennas for both bands have been constructed in the shape of a cross and are activated depending on which band is chosen. 25 watts is the power and we suggest you try checking out both frequencies.

Radio Armadillo has been busying himself with MW over previous weeks but all is still in tact for SW transmissions and the station has been heard a few times on both 5 MHz and 3 MHz. Mr. Armadillo has received complaints about his audio in the past; these have been addressed, but he now has problems with his signal. Plans have therefore been unveiled for a new antenna system in the very near future.

The Magic Spell is a station that was busy last summer on 76 metres with late night QSOs and has been largely quiet since. However, the 20 watt station is set to return and has been heard with a few tests and QSOs on 3945. Modulation is a little suspect at the moment but it should not be too long before this is sorted out.

Moving to Scotland, **Weekend Music Radio** has at last returned with some live programmes, mainly triggered by the visit of fast-talking Chris Ise from Crazy Wave Radio in Germany. WMR was broadcasting extensively over the Easter weekend with two transmitters on the go at the same time on Easter Sunday. 6210 housed the pre-recorded shows and 6244, the real live programmes. WMR struck 76 metres for the first time in ages during the early hours of Easter Monday with a most excellent signal and modulation that takes us back to the old days of the late 80s and the late-night broadcasts on 6 MHz. We certainly hope that Chris Ise will have succeeded in injecting a little more enthusiasm into Jack Russel to get onto 3 MHz more often with the live broadcasts that everyone wants to hear.

Radio Pamela had been active quite extensively on 76 metres until fairly recently but due to plans of marriage and various other commitments, Steve Most won't be back on air until at least some time in May.

Moving onto the continent and The Netherlands in particular, 76 metres is a haven for small QSO stations and some bigger ones as well. Notably, **Tranatlantic Radio** can often be heard with a belting signal and nice modulation. He was one of those involved in a large scale QSO on Easter Sunday and was heard on 3931 kHz. Broadcasting from the west of the country, TAR uses around 150 watts and an inverted V antenna.

Radio Pacman is not as regular as TAR but considering his excellent signal produced by only 5 watts, perhaps this particularly friendly pirate should be busier on the band.

Also from The Netherlands, **Radio Red King International** is quite busy on the band, also on 6299 in the 48 metre band. The famous voice of the operator, best known on 186 metres MW, was recently heard in England with a crashing signal. The power, however, was only 10 watts - quite amazing. The transmitting apparatus was an old army transceiver but plan are for something much more substantial in the very near future. 500 watts is the planned power of a new transmitter. The antenna currently being used in the same as that for MW but despite this significant mismatch, signals are getting out well, a recent report from Finland proving the effectiveness.

In Germany, **Radio Northlight** has recently been heard on 76 and it seems as though stations are gradually making the switch to this superior part of the SW spectrum.

48 metres

While 76 metres is prospering and conditions are set to improve as summer approaches, 48 metres is far from what it used to be. Stations are still active on the band though, with propagation not too bad for longer distances.

The most regular 6 MHz pirate is **Ozone Radio International**, or Radio Ozone as Gary Stevens likes to call it! Operator, Prince Terry doesn't do too much presenting nowadays but when he does, it's great to hear some real pirate sounding programmes. Ozone can be heard most Sunday mornings on ± 6210 kHz and signals are reasonable in the UK. Various tests have recently been carried out down the band on 5 MHz but the problem down there is that very few listeners are willing to stray into unknown territory.

SHORTWAVE NEWS

Radio Pandora has been a 48 metre regular over recent weeks and a steady flow of mail has been received. 6280 kHz is a favoured channel but there is a strong possibility that the station will make a move to the increasingly popular 3 MHz band. A 76 metre di-pole for transmitting has already been built and raised towards the skies; the transmitter doesn't seem too happy on the band but once this problem has been sorted, pre-recorded programmes will be heard on 76 metres instead of 48 metres.

From the Netherlands, **Blauwe Ster**, or the Blue Star, has recently been heard on 48 metres. Easter Sunday afternoon sounded like a real party in the studio as alcohol flowed and records were spun. A long programme was heard on 6295 kHz and a very good signal received in the UK. The power used by this Dutch MWER (1636 kHz) was 100 watts. Let's hope more is heard from everybody at the station because a happier atmosphere is certainly needed on 48 metres.

scandinavia

The Scandinavian scene was very busy a year back with a lot of stations. Today, there are only a few left with sporadic broadcasts. **Radio Fusion International** has bought a new transmitter but so far has only been heard once during a **Level 1** project. But let us hope that Jolly Jake returns soon with more regular programmes.

One of the most active stations last year, **Starshine Radio**, has been very quiet. In 1995 this station had almost two shows a month but during 1996, the station has only been logged once. Rumours tell us that Kim will do a few tests on 48 metres during the spring. This might be a result of the rather low popularity of the 76 metres, even though fine reception is available at most times of the year.

Another station that has been too quiet is **Heavy Dude Radio**. During 1996 only a few transmissions have taken place, these being on 41 metres. The operator has been very busy with other things but has promised a return at some point.

Stations from Scandinavia that seem to have completely closed down are: **Champions Radio**, **Radio Safari**, **Free Radio Noway**, **CBN**, **Channel Europe** and **Wave Radio International**. **Radio Baltic** was closed by the authorities after eight months of non-stop broadcasting.

Peter Laurett, the operator of *SBC* (Scandinavian Broadcasting Corporation) has returned under the name *NEPRS* (Northern Europe Pirate Relay Service). This guy stated after his "illness" that he should never return to shortwave again but it seems as though he's changed his mind.

The operator of *SSRS* (Swedish Shortwave Relay Service) has closed down after his transmitter broke down.

Bill Cosmic Radio also seems to have shut down. After a few relays in the USA, the station has not been heard on either 48 metres or 76 metres.

Apart from those mentioned, there are a few operators testing at the moment but it doesn't seem as though they are able to take the final step to do a real show. Let us hope for the best!

germany

The German scene has been totally changed. A lot of those studio pirates that were heard here and there have now become the owners of their own transmitters, such as *Dr. Tim* and *Radio Perfekt*. It also seems like all operators are now doing joint broadcasts whenever they can.

Crazy Wave Radio was voted the best pirate in Europe (by who?) and continues to do some quite nice shows. But there are still a lot of those studio pirates coming from the country, among them, *Radio Amazonia* and *Sunshine Radio International*. We don't count those going via *IRRS* (7125 kHz) as these are basically legal broadcasts.

Newcomers in Germany are *Radio Communication* and *Radio Laguna*, both with a moderate power but good modulation and audio quality.

Most of the European pirates seem to gather around 6260 kHz; I don't know if this is a common crystal but let us hope they discover the rest of the band as well.

Many stations have disappeared but it seems as though they are gradually coming back in one form or another.

Titanic celebrated 20 years not so long ago - some stations never say die but if the operators believe it necessary, let them continue! It's a little bit like Volvo should change their name to Ovolov!

holland

Thanks to the PTT, the Dutch scene is very confusing for the moment. Stations change name more often than we change our socks!

Several stations have converted to SW from MW and among some of the new ones are: *Radio Bluebird*, *Radio Select*, *Radio Grensjager* and *Radio Hoogland*.

Torenvalk and *Tonair* have started a project together called *New World*.

Many of the QSOers that were previously active on a Saturday can now be heard on Sundays between 1100-1700 UTC. ■

Let everybody know that Pirate Chat has returned. You no longer have to suffer expensive imitations because the real thing is back - news, information and the most informative feature articles. No where else can you learn so much about the world of Free Radio.

The Pirate Chat Editor asks...

"Will it ever change?"

NOW just let me check my calendar... yes, it is 1996, which means that Free Radio has now been existing for many, decades. Bearing this in mind, I would very much like to know why such a large amount of pirate listeners are so half-soaked!

What on earth is going on? I'm not referring to listeners of *FM Free Radio* because they seem to pretty much have their heads screwed on; I'm not even referring to MW listeners but what I do have in mind is the listeners of the shortwave pirates. I don't quite know why people are like they are but it can get very frustrating!

I would like to point out that these pages are not particularly meant to offend anybody but are just meant to try and change things, which from past experience certainly seems to be a very thankless task.

Let me give you an example... for the past several issues of *Pirate Chat* (if you can remember back that far), I have tried

to point out to SW listeners that 76 metres is a very useful band and that 48 metres is not as reliable. 76 metres, on the other hand, is currently terrific, with stations broadcasting at all times of the day and night, at any time of the week.

Despite my putting forward this information in a number of forms and trying to tell people what is happening, few people seem willing to take any notice! If I remember correctly, I even had one person tell me to stop trying to fill the magazine in the easiest possible way, i.e. my messages about 76 metres - what a complete cheek!

Here I am trying to do my best and people seem very reluctant to take any notice! Another comment that I have heard regularly just recently is "I haven't heard many pirates on short wave recently." What the hell is this supposed to mean! 76 metres is packed with pirates. Just last night, which was a Wednesday, I heard five stations on the band, and this is on a weekday evening! Just imagine what a weekend can be like.

The sorry state of 48 metres but nobody willing to move forward

I am beginning to wonder whether things will ever change!

Granted, there are some people who seem willing to comprehend what I have said about 76 metres but there is another hardcore group who seem unwilling to take any notice.

Perhaps those people can tell me what the fascination is with tuning around 48 metres relentlessly on a Sunday morning when there is hardly anything to hear?

Why not just listen to 76 metres instead, where propagation conditions are somewhat more reliable and where there are many more stations to hear?

As I write this article, I can imagine some of you saying, well I have heard stations on 48 metres recently. Perhaps you have but this has only been because propagation was in your favour. It is true that stations operating on the "good old pirate band" can be heard at some distance with the present solar conditions but does one listener on the other side of the world really matter?

WILL IT EVER CHANGE?

In any case, for those people who can hear stations on 48 metres with the current propagation, just imagine what reception must be like on 76 metres!

It is not only station listeners whom I suggest use 76 metres but station operators should also take heed from the advice. Conditions are so much more reliable than 48 metres, both daytime and night-time.

For goodness sake, please start listening to this band and break the old 48 metre band habit. There is absolutely no reason why short wave pirates should be broadcasting inbetween 6200 and 6300 on a Sunday morning and at no other time.

Some pirate stations have strived to change things and can be heard at more or less any time on 76 metres. The pirates that have seen fit to change have not done so for their own health but so as listeners will actually be able to hear them. If the station operators have done this for you, then please listen to them! After all, as the old cliché goes, listeners act as the wages for pirate operators!

While I am standing up high on my soap box, I may as well bring up another subject that has

been bugging me for some time... I will begin by asking you whether or not you would watch television without a sufficient antenna? Of course you wouldn't. In that case then, why do so many listeners of short wave *Free Radio* stations use inadequate aerials?

So many times recently, I have heard about listeners who have got fantastic receivers and then a bit of old wire wrapped about the curtain rail! How on earth can you expect good reception with such a set-up? Perhaps some of you don't know that the aerial is the most important thing about listening to a broadcast. It's all very well to have an expensive receiver but without a decent aerial, the whole thing is a waste of time.

Turning back to 76 metres, several people have said to me that they don't get very good reception of the pirates on this band, or it is always very noisy on the band. This is untrue! The reason that people experience such problems, is all down to the antenna! A good antenna says goodbye to a long list of problems.

If some of you are not sure what a good antenna is, then I will tell you that the very best antenna you can use is the simple dipole. All this consists of is

two pieces of wire, with a length of coaxial cable coming from the centre to your receiver. What could be any easier! Still though, people tell me that it is too complicated or they haven't got enough room. Both of these problems can be combated and I would welcome any inquiries to the PC HQ. Just send me a letter and I will certainly be more than willing to help.

As I have said, the year is 1996 and time that things saw some change. 48 metres was terrific in the 1970s and 80s but times have changed and unfortunately, too many listeners haven't changed with the times.

Get a decent antenna and give 76 metres a try, because I'm sure that some of you will be amazed.

I welcome any comments about what I have said and please feel free to say whatever you want. If I say whatever I please, you can by all means do the same.

Starting from the next issue onwards, I am re-introducing the letters page, so any of your comments will be printed, and I will offer a response wherever appropriate!

Thanks for reading what I have to say and don't just forget about it - do something about it! ●

TRADING CORNER

SWEDISH REPORT SERVICE NEWS

The SRS who forward mail to many international SW pirates and to *Pirate Chat*, are now producing a weekly news sheet. This is available via fax, Internet or postal system for a small amount. Write for further details to: SRS, Östra Porten 29, 442 54 Ytterby, Sweden.

If any readers would like to contribute regular information, or write any articles for publication, please do so at your own will. Any contributions will be extremely gratefully received

HELP!!!

Did you listen to Scandinavian Pirates during the 70s and 80s? Any information would be welcomed. Send copies of QSLs and info sheets to:
SRS, Östra Porten 29, 442 54 Ytterby, Sweden.

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22646 Lund
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**Don't forget to tune
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Please note that *Pirate Chat* is now using only one address. Please send any news, views, comments or articles to: *Pirate Chat*, c/o Östra Porten 29, 442 54 Ytterby, Sweden. All mail received quickly and promptly dealt with.

ENGLISH DUO IN THE NETHERLANDS

Written by the Pirate Chat Editor

It all happened last summer. I was about to take my now annual pilgrimage to the pirate capital of the world. For the third time, I was preparing to visit The Netherlands.

On the previous two occasions, I had to make do with my own company but this time it was going to be different - notorious pirate, Bill Lewis of Live Wire Radio was going to accompany me. However, before the historic voyage could get under way, I had to make my way to a small town, miles from anywhere, a place where only the toughest survive and a place where there is enough room for only one radio station - I had to get to *Livewireville!*

Our decision to head for Holland had been last minute and we had not properly arranged to visit many pirates but nevertheless, the ten day holiday on which we were set to embark, was going to be another memorable trip; one on which I would further my understanding of a totally unique way of life that exists just across the water from British shores and a holiday on which Bill would learn a great deal about the way in which Dutch pirates operate and consequently establish a great deal of admiration for these powerful pioneers.

Before we set out for Dutch soil, I had managed to organise somewhere to stay for the duration and it is at this point that I must send great thanks to Johan and Anna of Radio Barones for their most outstanding hospitality. The way in which we were treated was second to none; all of our meals were provided and we were taken to visit many pirate stations. I would be extremely pleased to repay such kindness at any time

and hope that I am able to do so at some point in the future.

With accommodation sorted, all we had to do was get to Holland. Our ferry had been booked and we decided that rather than drive all the way to the port, we would break our journey with an overnight stay at the location of Steve Midnight, he of Subterranean Sounds. I had met up with Bill at his place and when reaching Steve's, we started as we meant to go on, with radio talk and a visit to a nearby dealer of beverages of the alcoholic variety. *All was set for a fine holiday in the company of some of the world's most renowned pirate operators.*

The following morning, Bill and I left for our North Sea crossing that would see us arrive at The Hook of Holland at around 1800 on Friday evening. This is where the fun was to begin but not quite in the way we had imagined!

Map reading is not exactly my strong point, particularly when everything is on the opposite side of the road and you are in a part of the country in which you have never previously been. After some careful negotiation, we managed to make our way onto a motorway which appeared to be going in our direction. Rotterdam passed us by, as did Arnhem but as we moved into the east, problems began to arise and I'm still unsure how we turned a relatively simple two-three hour journey into a brain testing, mind bending five hours! However, we eventually found Ruurlo, an area with which I was familiar, leaving us with no other hitches, or so we thought . . .

ENGLISH DUO IN THE NETHERLANDS

. . . the time was now around 2300 and something I had omitted from my plans was to get Johan's address! We were in a small Dutch town in what seemed like the dead of night, with not a clue where to go! Never fear! I had remembered where to find Gertie at Radio Delta and after deliberation of some strange road signs, we managed to get to his house. The only problem with this, however, was that everybody was in bed and the only thing we could raise from its slumber was the dog!

Next plan - one of the pubs in the town was still open, so we parked the car and in we went - the place was deserted and looking very much as though the bell for last orders had long since been rung. Oh well, in typical British fashion, oblivious to the circumstances, I managed to muster a couple of dubious sounding words, vaguely resembling something from the Dutch language together, and after a few puzzled looks from a very unfortunate chap behind the bar, myself and Bill soon had a drink in our hands and a telephone had been located.

Trying with extreme difficulty, I finally remembered Johan's number and a situation that bordered on the brink of a nightmare was soon halted dead in its tracks. Within a few minutes, the famous Mr. Barones had arrived, explained to the bar tender what two ridiculously stupid English anoraks were doing in his pub and we were on our way to our salvation for the next ten days.

At long last we had found our destination, or we had after we followed Johan through the lanes and into the night back to his house. Here we met girlfriend Anna and security guard Rana - the dog!

The remainder of the evening, somewhat shorter than had been anticipated, was spent discussing our monstrous journey to the pirate land and taking time for a couple of beers and something to eat.

Next day, Saturday was started by a visit to pirate friend, Gerald of Radio Santana. I had met him the previous year and found him as friendly as ever and still desperately in sought of my Sony receiver! Also at Gerald's place was Arie from radio Hawaii; the two chuckle brothers went a long way to making our holiday as good as it was because we saw them quite a lot and were very kindly taken to meet various other pirates with them. I'm only sorry that my little deal with them fell through but I'm told that Gerald has managed to obtain another Sony from elsewhere!

As well as spending Saturday with Gerald and Arie, Bill and I also made a visit to Radio Delta; this time, the dog was not the only one awake and we managed to see Gertie who showed us what he had been up to with his various transmitters. *He has been the subject of a couple of raids in recent times and is currently being particularly careful not to incur the wrath of the authorities, hence his general absence from the bands.*

In a bid to see as many people as possible, after seeing Delta and receiving a few directions from Johan, we set off in pursuit of Radio Utopia. I have kept in contact with operator, Wim for some time and was looking forward to meeting him again and was not disappointed to find him exactly as I remembered from the year before.

While I was taking everything in my stride, having experienced most of it before, I think Bill was a little bemused by the whole pirate attitude in The Netherlands but nevertheless, enjoyed everything as much as me, trying to appreciate the sheer scale of the pirate network.

We all took a look at the Utopia studio and made a quick QSO with some of the other locals on MW; one thing that is different in Holland to anywhere else is that whenever a pirate switches on his transmitter for a report, somebody will

ENGLISH DUO IN THE NETHERLANDS

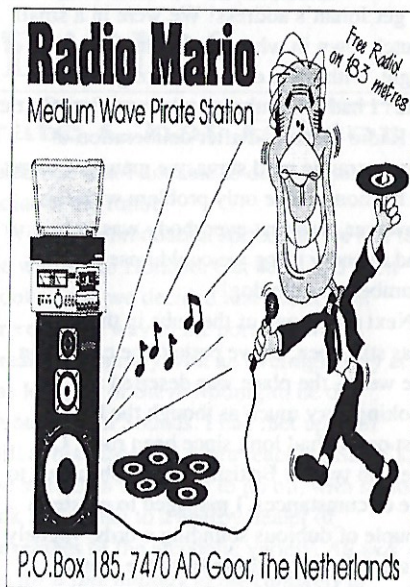
always come back with the relevant information and because many stations are condensed into a relatively small part of the country, signals always sound phenomenally good.

Our stay at Utopia's place did not last all that long because we were to see Wim and his wife later that evening. Therefore, we soon headed off to see another broadcaster and following Wim along several roads, we soon found ourselves at the studio of Radio Mario. The following episode was to be one we would not forget in a hurry!

... I knew that Mr. Mario could not speak too much English and that I might have to try and spout the odd bit of my appalling Dutch; however, I had never really previously considered the difficulty in trying to hold civilised conversations when neither person knows what the other is talking about! Neither Bill nor myself could string anything coherent together and Mr. Mario was trying flat out to try and talk English but it was very difficult to try and say anything constructive! Even my comment about the weather turned into a major disaster. Nevertheless, Mario was extremely pleased to have us visit him and despite the distinct language barrier, it was a great pleasure for us to be at his studio.

Although we all had difficulty in saying a great deal, we were shown the huge antenna mast, the focal point of the village, at close range as well as various transmitters that are being used or have been used by the station in the past. All in all, the meeting was pretty good but oh how I wish I'd tried a little harder with "Learn Dutch in three months"!

After Mario had led us back to the main road in his car, at an unbelievably fast speed, we headed back to Johan and Anna as Saturday night was set to be no ordinary Saturday night! A pirate barbecue had been arranged and the the house, or at least the



back garden, was transformed with huge speakers, coloured lights and all manner of things to ensure an enjoyable evening.

After a little sleep and an attempt to absorb all that had already happened in just one day, it was outside to join the party. At this point, Johan's great friend Erwin, the operator of old international station Black Nun, had arrived with his girlfriend; as time passed, Wim of Radio Utopia arrived with his wife and Gerald and Arie with their girlfriends also arrived, all set for a good night of fun and drink and reminiscing over mine and Bill's earlier embarrassment!

The drinks were knocked back and the music blasted out, all in a style that could only be Dutch. To sit out in the garden until times such as 0300 and 0400 in this country, playing music, laughing and joking would be totally unheard of; in the east of Holland, however, all is different.

When the party eventually wound down, it was away with some of the empty bottles and chairs and then into the house for another drink or two!

ENGLISH DUO IN THE NETHERLANDS

Here, Bill and Johan managed to talk for what must have been another couple of hours, amongst other things about when Radio Barones will return to the air. His days of regular long programmes seem to be lost at the moment, mainly due to the necessity of building a new studio.

Eventually, I raised the white flag and headed for the sack for a sleep that was to incorporate a significant part of Sunday morning. That didn't matter because the only visit that we had planned for the day was in the afternoon to weekly MWer, Radio Korak. At one time he had used to be a notorious non-verifier of listener reports, but he is now very proud of the letters received, and replies as quickly as possible, as we found out when we made the journey to his studio.

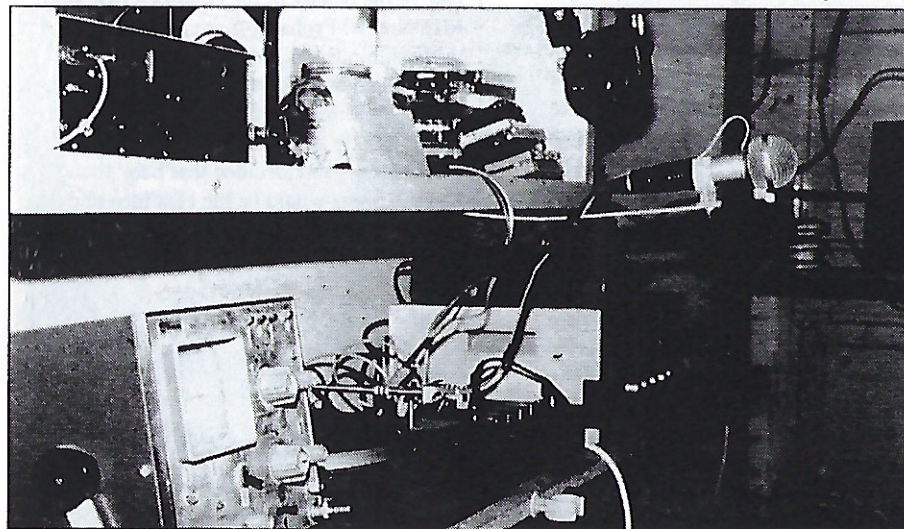
Bill, Johan, Anna and myself were all made extremely welcome by Mr. Korak and his girlfriend and again, we were astounded by a superb command of the English language from both of them.

The studio itself was a little different to what I had expected; a great deal of pride is

obviously taken in the appearance and of all of the records which are neatly filed. I was very impressed, also by the signal that Radio Korak puts out when considering the old army transmitter and the relatively low power, compared to huge stations such as Barones. The aerial system was also quite interesting as it was not too high and very surprising that such a good signal is the result.

The afternoon soon drifted by, along with a few drinks and something to eat and before we knew it, goodbyes were being said and it was time to move on. I would like to say though that meeting Korak, a pirate who many of the other Dutch pirates have never heard because of the propagation conditions, was very pleasant and I very much look forward to another visit when I next visit the country.

Our next port of call was to be Johan's house for something to eat before setting off to see Radio Nooitgedacht for the first of several times. His studio was just the same as I remembered from last time, even though it is not used quite as much nowadays.



Part of the old Radio Barones studio and possible inspiration for Johan to return to the air?

After listening to some Dutch talking between Johan and Johan, it was back home for a well earned rest, a trend to continue for the next couple of days while we regained our strength!

Those next few days were spent leisurely looking round the area, visiting places such as Enschede, Oldenzaal, Hengelo and so forth; we had visited quite a number of pirates in the first couple of days but were now taking in life from a "normal" view, finding so many good ideas that Dutch people have that could be put to excellent use here in England. For example, in Enschede we parked the car and unlike over here, we didn't have to put our 40p in the ticket machine, or 60p, or whatever, but simply paid for the time we had used when we left the car park. It was all so extremely easy; there are some car parks in this country that use the idea but it is all so difficult-looking, contrasting so very much with The Netherlands.

The whole country seems so relaxed and easy going, making everything a complete pleasure rather than any trouble. Perhaps this view is totally biased and one that the Dutch people would disagree with, but even so, the English could learn a lot from the small country just across the water.

By the time Wednesday arrived, it was time to go pirate hunting once again; we made various telephone calls in an attempt to get through to my good friend at Radio Pacman but alas, no luck was achieved - Henk had gone on holiday! We tried to get through to Radio Merkurius but once we did, we found that he had forgotten that he once ran a station of that name and thought that we were talking about a local landmark! Anyway, we eventually managed to get through to Albert at Radio Scotland who I had met the previous year; luckily he had the week off work and didn't mind us visiting him.

The journey was made from the east to the centre of the Netherlands. We actually managed to cover quite a distance without making any wrong turns but as we tried to locate the exact place at which we would find the Radio Scotland studio, a few little errors crept in! These, however, were quickly ironed out and we soon found where we had been looking for.

We found Albert in his radio room in midst QSO with some of the 1400 kHz pirates; we duly joined in the conversation and had a chat to various people, including friend and Pirate Chat reader, Jean of MW and SW station, Radio Meteor.

1400 kHz and a few kHz either side is a haven for QSO stations who can be heard in droves during the daytime in The Netherlands, many with very good signals.

After taking a good look at everything on offer, it was off to our next destination, but where was that? As we left Beilen, we weren't too sure where we were heading for and decided to just drive and once again to take in the beauty of the country - first stop McDonalds! Probably quite an unwise move in hindsight but very much appreciated at the time!

After experiencing the delight of a Dutch burger, pretty much the same as in any other country, we decided that back to Johan's place would be the best idea and we could then take the rest of the day as it came.



RADIO SYLVANIA

Medium Wave 1636 kHz

P.O.Box 101, 7670 AC Vriezenveen,
The Netherlands

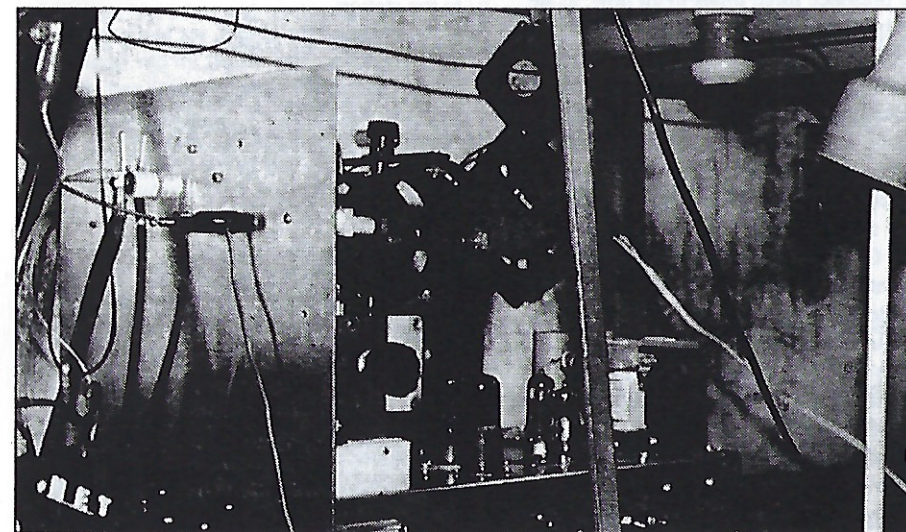
That evening, it was off to see Appie at Radio Sylvania, a particularly good pirate friend who I had met on my first visit to the country but unfortunately missed last year. This time, though, there was no mistake as Johan, Anna, Bill and myself all managed to track him down, eventually by his antenna mast!

Sadly, Radio Sylvania no longer exists as the transmitter has been sold to another pirate. When we met Appie, it was quite clear how he was not broadcasting and could not broadcast for any sort of lengthy duration. He had recently suffered a serious heart attack, which he put down to his transmitter because of the high power and possible harmful rays that it was emitting in the studio. Broadcasts at that time were for no longer than about 15 minutes but despite this, the antenna was certainly something and one of the highest, if not the highest that we saw while on our travels. If I remember correctly, from the base to the very tip of the vertical construction, the length was 31 metres - 102.3 feet! In England if a mast can reach five metres, it is no mean feat!

Seeing Appie brought back the memories of my first trip to The Netherlands when I visited him with Hans from Radio Pirana. This time around, we had a little more time to spare and we leisurely had a few drinks before bidding farewell to move on to see another Achterhoek favourite.

Our next port of call was the Tijdbreker studio, where after a rather overwhelming welcome from two huge dogs, we made our way to the centre of activity where Henk was busy transmitting as usual. I don't think I've ever seen any transmitter valves pushed to the extreme limit as those in the transmitter, glowing redder than you could ever imagine! Still, everything was working well as we found out when trying to fool Grensjaeger into believing that Bill was actually transmitting from England with just a few watts of power; he fell for it at first but was a little wiser following a tip-off from Mr. Taylor!

We stayed at Henk's place for some time, broadcasting, drinking and sampling the delights of Dutch satellite television - wonderful!



The transmitter used by Radio Tijdbreker

Another day was soon over and capped off with a couple of more drinks back at Johan's place. The whole holiday though, was not just pirate radio and more pirate radio; as I've said, we visited various places of interest, and we spent some time drinking and chatting at our leisure, particularly with Johan and Anna (sorry about the glass - clumsy!). It really was enjoyable to have plenty of time to take everything in and appreciate the factors that make The Netherlands one of the nicest places that you could wish to visit.

As well as Johan and Anna, Bill and myself also spent some time at Gerald's (Santana) place and spent a few nights drinking in the garden and discussing the somewhat decaying state of *Free Radio*. All in all, it was a very enjoyable holiday which soon came to an end.

On the night before we were due to return to England, there were a few more visits to undertake, the first to Radio Hollandia, a pirate who has had to suffer my presence three times in all now, as he has been a target on each of my visits! Gerald took us here and we were soon accompanied by pirate brother, Arie from Hawaii; Hollandia didn't mind too much though as we invaded his house to take a look at his set-up. As ever, the bicycle dealer was very busy and we only stopped for a short while, but it was nice to catch up with Casper again and find that he still has the interest for pirate radio that he has always had.

After a quick drink or two in the garden, it was time to make a huge journey to another pirate - this time, it was into the car and off to see the shortwave Radio Santana.

We knew when we had found his house - it was the one surrounded by all manner of antennas! In the back garden we found a cluster of chairs and a table bearing all manner of niceties, and sitting round was Mr. and Mrs. Santana awaiting our presence.

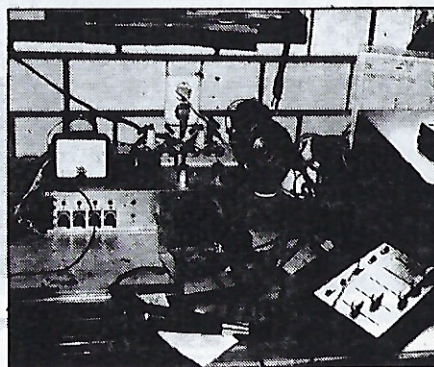
Some of the pirates we had visited during previous days could not speak too much English but there was no such problem here as we had full conversations about all manner of subjects.

It was very nice to have the weather to sit outside all of the time, adding to the enjoyment of our Dutch experience, but of course, the main component was the people who we actually met, the people who I very much look forward to visiting next time I am in the country, which with any luck might be as close as only a couple of months away.

After a few drinks - alcoholic and non-alcoholic, we all went to take a close look at the Santana studio, used predominantly for QSOs on 76-metres. It was small to say the least but nonetheless, in true Dutch style. The record deck had been removed as the station is now speech only and in any case, it would take up too much room!

The transmitter was nice and compact but in full working order as we have found out since returning to England and listening to the station.

After seeing the studio, we had another little drink and then set off on our final pirate visit of the vacation. Next and lastly, it was to Ruurlo to see the operator of Radio Mexicano, a station that isn't so active nowadays but set for a return to MW at some point in the future.



Part of the Radio Hollandia studio

We arrived at the Mexicano studio to a fine greeting and as usual, were plied with drinks while chatting and listening to Hawaii, Santana and Mexicano talking, trying to decipher what they might have been saying about us!

The studio, a little bit worse for wear in the cobweb department, was a conglomeration of transmitters and equipment, and the aerial up in the trees was only half there - I think! Even though the station wasn't active, it was nice to visit Mexicano, especially as I have heard him before here in England with a fairly respectable signal.

After seeing the studio, we had a couple more drinks before heading back to Johan's. The holiday was over - our time was up and within a few hours we would be heading back to dreary England!

The last few hours at Johan's were particularly memorable - more drinks and in the early hours, he gave Tijdbreker a call and asked him to say goodbye to us live on air! Everybody did so much to ensure another great holiday, which indeed it was. It's always very nice to meet the people to whom you have listened on the radio and I now look forward to doing the whole thing again!

The day of the return journey soon arrived, and to show our appreciation for Johan and Anna's hospitality, we bought a crate of Heineken, well that was actually the second as we had already bought one for the barbecue, but as expected, that was soon polished off, mostly by myself and Bill! Anyway, Johan was quite pleased that we had provided enough drink for a quiet evening in!

Before long, we were on our way back to England, armed with the correct route to see us safely back to Hook without making any unwanted deviations!

All went well on the journey until we hit traffic and noticed that the petrol had taken

a particularly undesirable dive towards the empty marker. All panic was unnecessary though, as we just made the ferry in time and the fuel just about lasted out.

The ferry journey seemed to take longer than ever but was far from uneventful!

After what seemed like hours and hours, and after Cblonel Crusty managed to get moving, Bill and I were able to leave the ferry and head for home. First stop though was the petrol station, where of course, I also had to buy a newspaper to see what I had been missing on the horseracing front!

Eventually, we reached *Livewireville*, from where ten days earlier we had set out on a mission to visit some of Europe's most well-known pirate stations. We had achieved our goal and I had once again appreciated the reasons that make The Netherlands *the pirate capital of the world*.

After nearly two years away from the Free Radio scene, Pirate Chat is back! We apologise to all those people who subscribed and received no magazines but assure you that now we have returned, we are here to stay.